D. R. Bishop
(314) 694-2891 (Office)
(314) 432-2030 (Home)

IMMEDIATELY

MONSANTO ANNOUNCES
DIOXIN TEST FINDINGS
IN LOUISIANA

LULING, La., Sept. 2 -- Monsanto Company said today that extensive company tests at its plant here have found dioxin in a small, localized area of the facility where the herbicide 2,4,5-T was handled in the mid-1960s. Company medical officials said that there is no indication that the dioxin poses any danger to employees, the public or the environment.

Vincent E. Boyen, Luling plant manager, said that as a result of the tests, the company has begun further sampling of the localized area where the dioxin was found. To assure that no exposure will result from disturbing the soil, the company also will cover the area with plastic sheeting and a layer of shells.

Mr. Boyen said tests found measurable dioxin in only two of 26 soil samples. "These two positive findings were found in a 10 by 20 foot area along a railroad siding inside the 1,555-acre plant. The site is more than one-half mile inside the plant boundary. Results from the remaining 24 soil samples taken in other areas of

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the plant, including four on the plant perimeter, showed no dioxin," he said. "In the two positive samples," he continued, "soil from the top two inches of the test cores contained 49 and 125 parts per billion (ppb) respectively. Further analysis of the latter core sample, from 125 ppb sample however, found subsurface contamination about four to six inches below ground in the low parts per million 5-16 ppm (ppm) range. This single finding is inconsistent with the pattern of test results seen elsewhere in the plant and is believed to be a consequence of inadvertent spillage that likely occurred as 2,4,5-T was loaded into railcars during brief periods of time some 16 years ago," Mr. Boyen said.

Commenting on the test results, George Roush, M.D., Director of Monsanto's Department of Medicine and Environmental Health, said that all available evidence indicates that once dioxin becomes bound to soil, it represents no hazard to man. "Indeed, the substantial amount of medical information available to date, including the results of three separate health studies of Monsanto employees exposed to relatively high levels during the manufacture of 2,4,5-T at the company's Nitro, W.Va., plant, clearly shows that, other than the skin condition chloracne, no long-term health effects have ever been associated with exposure to dioxin," he said. "This conclusion," he continued, "is further supported by the American Medical Association. The AMA reported in October of 1982 that 'Thus far, long-term effects (from exposure to dioxin) other than persistent chloracne have not been seen."

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According to Mr. Boyen, no dioxin was found in any of ~~five~~ three water samples or in products currently made at the plant. "Three air samples taken in the area of the rail siding showed virtually undetectable levels in the 0.01 parts per quadrillion range. That's 300 times below the level which EPA has projected as 'ultra safe' for long-term human exposure and is well below background levels typically found in air-monitoring tests in major U.S. cities. Five additional air samples from other areas of the plant contained no dioxin.

"These test results strongly suggest that the contamination is localized within a small area of the plant," he said.

Monsanto has discussed the test results with state and federal officials and has informed the plant work force of the findings.

"The herbicide 2,4,5-T was handled in the area along the railroad tracks during two intervals within a 24-month period from 1965 to 1967," Mr. Boyen said. "The product was never manufactured here and only was handled for a relatively short time. It is known, however, that 2,4,5-T can contain dioxin as a contaminant."

Mr. Boyen explained that the Luling plant received a few shipments of the solid form of 2,4,5-T from a company plant in West Virginia and converted it to its liquid form for shipment and further processing.

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"No dioxin would have been generated during the conversion process. However, any dioxin already present in the solid product received from West Virginia would have remained in the converted liquid form," he said.

Test sampling at the plant was done in mid-August following a meeting with officials from EPA Region VI in Dallas held to discuss the plant's participation in EPA's national dioxin surveillance program. The Luling plant is one of more than 200 industrial sites around the country listed in a 1980 EPA report as operating processes that potentially could generate dioxin.

"The company testing has shown that the processes listed in the EPA report as requiring investigation at the Luling plant -- the manufacture of propanil, a herbicide, and 3,4-dichloroaniline, a chemical intermediate -- did not generate any byproduct dioxin," Mr. Boyen said. "That's yet another indication that the dioxin stems from the limited handling of 2,4,5-T back in the 1960s."

Monsanto's Luling plant has been in operation since 1954. Approximately 830 employees work at the facility which is located on the west bank of the Mississippi River 15 miles west of New Orleans.

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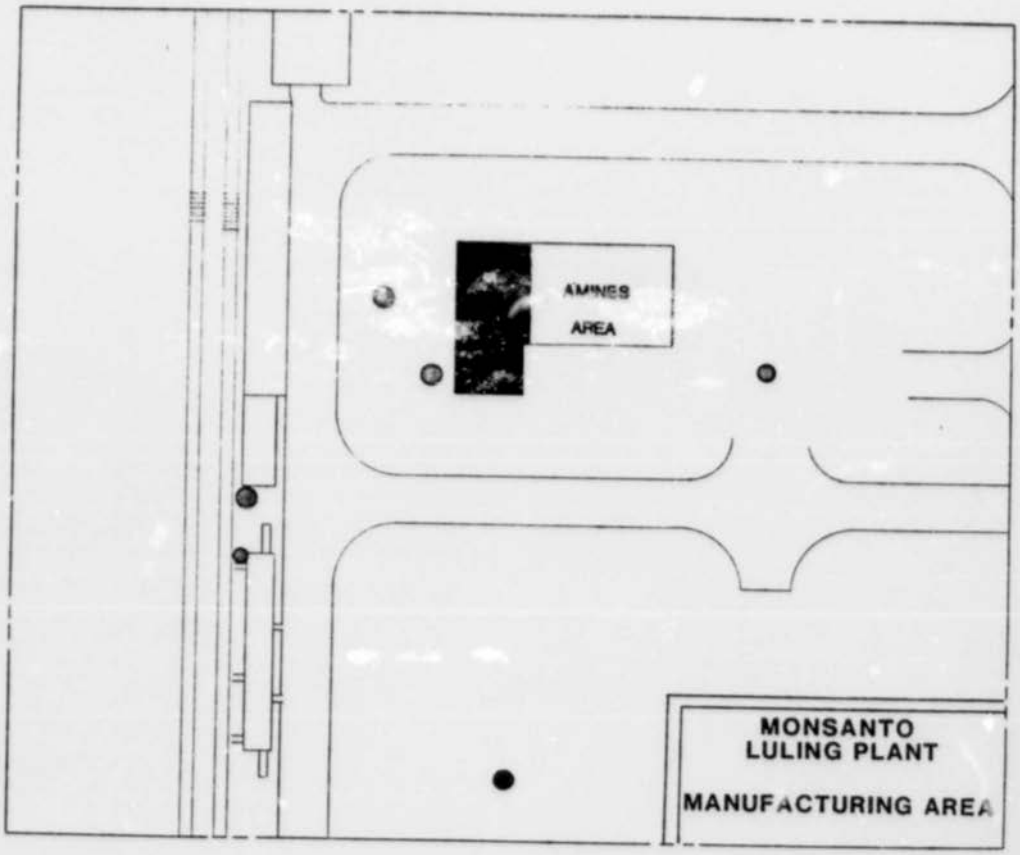

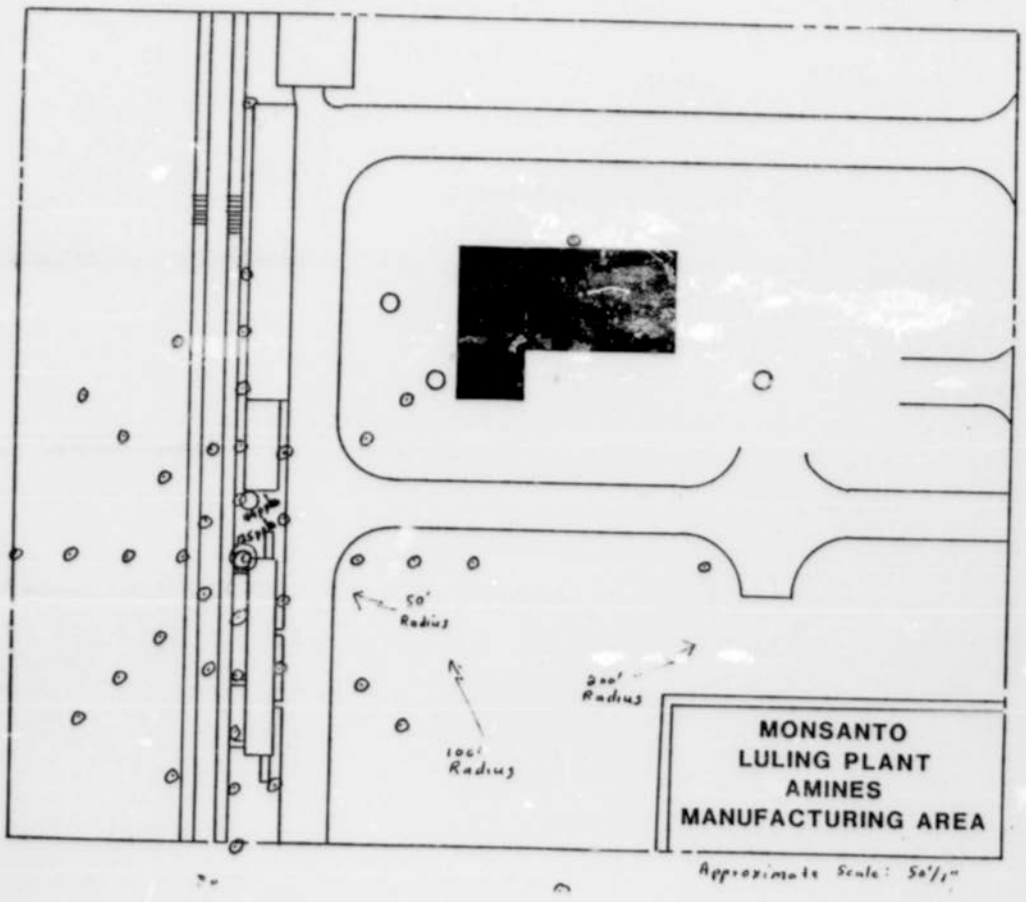

Monsanto

Monsanto Agricultural Products Co.
800 N. Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63167
(314) 694-3446

Larry Fürrer
Environmental Affairs Director

Monsanto

Monsanto Agricultural Products Company
P.O. Box 174
Luling, Louisiana 70070
(504) 785-8211

Jude M. Swint
Quality Assurance Superintendent